

vote on the motion to suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 4848, as amended, on which the yeas and nays were ordered.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. PALLONE) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 4848, as amended.

This will be a 5-minute vote.

The vote was taken by electronic device, and there were—yeas 384, nays 23, not voting 22, as follows:

[Roll No. 35]

YEAS—384

Abercrombie	Cuellar	Hoekstra
Ackerman	Culberson	Holden
Aderholt	Cummings	Holt
Akin	Davis (AL)	Honda
Alexander	Davis (CA)	Hooley
Allen	Davis (IL)	Hoyer
Altmire	Davis (KY)	Hulshof
Andrews	Davis, David	Hunter
Arcuri	Davis, Lincoln	Inglis (SC)
Baca	Davis, Tom	Inslee
Bachus	Deal (GA)	Israel
Baird	DeFazio	Issa
Barrett (SC)	DeGette	Jackson (IL)
Barrow	Delahunt	Jackson-Lee
Bartlett (MD)	DeLauro	(TX)
Barton (TX)	Dent	Jefferson
Bean	Diaz-Balart, L.	Johnson (GA)
Becerra	Diaz-Balart, M.	Johnson (IL)
Berkley	Dicks	Johnson, E. B.
Berman	Dingell	Johnson, Sam
Berry	Doggett	Jones (NC)
Biggert	Donnelly	Jones (OH)
Bilbray	Doyle	Kagen
Billirakis	Drake	Kanjorski
Bishop (GA)	Dreier	Kaptur
Bishop (NY)	Edwards	Keller
Bishop (UT)	Ehlers	Kennedy
Blunt	Ellison	Kildee
Boehner	Ellsworth	Kilpatrick
Bonner	Emanuel	Kind
Bono Mack	Engel	King (NY)
Boozman	English (PA)	Kingston
Boren	Eshoo	Kirk
Boswell	Etheridge	Klein (FL)
Boustany	Fallin	Kline (MN)
Boyd (FL)	Fattah	Knollenberg
Boyd (KS)	Feeney	Kucinich
Brady (PA)	Ferguson	Kuhl (NY)
Brady (TX)	Filner	LaHood
Braley (IA)	Forbes	Lampson
Brown (SC)	Fossella	Langevin
Brown, Corrine	Frank (MA)	Larsen (WA)
Buchanan	Frelinghuysen	Larson (CT)
Burgess	Gallely	Latham
Burton (IN)	Gerlach	LaTourette
Butterfield	Giffords	Latta
Buyer	Gilchrest	Lee
Calvert	Gillibrand	Levin
Camp (MI)	Gingrey	Lewis (CA)
Cantor	Gohmert	Lewis (GA)
Capito	Gonzalez	Lewis (KY)
Capps	Goode	Linder
Capuano	Goodlatte	Lipinski
Cardoza	Gordon	LoBiondo
Carnahan	Granger	Loeb sack
Carney	Graves	Lofgren, Zoe
Carter	Green, Al	Lucas
Castle	Green, Gene	Lungren, Daniel
Castor	Grijalva	E.
Chabot	Gutierrez	Lynch
Chandler	Hall (NY)	Maloney (FL)
Clarke	Hall (TX)	Maloney (NY)
Clay	Hare	Markley
Cleaver	Harman	Marshall
Clyburn	Hastings (FL)	Matheson
Coble	Hastings (WA)	Matsui
Cohen	Hayes	McCarthy (CA)
Cole (OK)	Heller	McCarthy (NY)
Conaway	Herger	McCaul (TX)
Conyers	Herseth Sandlin	McCollum (MN)
Cooper	Higgins	McCotter
Costa	Hill	McCrery
Costello	Hinchey	McDermott
Courtney	Hinojosa	McGovern
Crenshaw	Hirono	McHenry
Crowley	Hobson	McHugh
Cubin	Hodes	McIntyre

McKeon	Rahall	Space
McMorris	Ramstad	Spratt
Rodgers	Rangel	Stark
McNerney	Regula	Stearns
McNulty	Rehberg	Stupak
Meek (FL)	Reichert	Sullivan
Meeks (NY)	Renzi	Sutton
Melancon	Reyes	Tancredo
Mica	Reynolds	Tauscher
Michaud	Richardson	Taylor
Miller (FL)	Rodriguez	Terry
Miller (MI)	Rogers (AL)	Thompson (CA)
Miller (NC)	Rogers (KY)	Thompson (MS)
Miller, Gary	Rogers (MI)	Thornberry
Miller, George	Ros-Lehtinen	Tiahrt
Mitchell	Roskam	Tiberi
Mollohan	Ross	Tierney
Moore (KS)	Rothman	Towns
Moore (WI)	Roybal-Allard	Tsongas
Moran (KS)	Rush	Turner
Moran (VA)	Ryan (OH)	Udall (CO)
Murphy (CT)	Ryan (WI)	Udall (NM)
Murphy, Patrick	Salazar	Upton
Murphy, Tim	Sánchez, Linda	Van Hollen
Murtha	T.	Velázquez
Musgrave	Sarbanes	Visclosky
Myrick	Saxton	Walberg
Nadler	Schakowsky	Walden (OR)
Napolitano	Schiff	Walsh (NY)
Neal (MA)	Schmidt	Walz (MN)
Neugebauer	Schwartz	Wamp
Nunes	Scott (GA)	Wasserman
Oberstar	Scott (VA)	Schultz
Obey	Sensenbrenner	Waters
Oliver	Serrano	Watson
Ortiz	Sessions	Watt
Pallone	Sestak	Waxman
Pascrell	Shays	Weiner
Pastor	Shea-Porter	Welch (VT)
Payne	Sherman	Weldon (FL)
Pearce	Shimkus	Weller
Perlmutter	Shuler	Westmoreland
Peterson (MN)	Shuster	Wexler
Peterson (PA)	Simpson	Whitfield (KY)
Petri	Sires	Wilson (NM)
Pickering	Skelton	Wilson (OH)
Pitts	Slaughter	Wilson (SC)
Platts	Smith (NE)	Wittman (VA)
Pomeroy	Smith (NJ)	Wolf
Price (CA)	Smith (TX)	Wu
Price (NC)	Snyder	Young (AK)
Putnam	Solis	Young (FL)
Radanovich	Souder	

NAYS—23

Bachmann	Flake	Mack
Broun (GA)	Foxx	Paul
Brown-Waite,	Franks (AZ)	Pence
Ginny	Garrett (NJ)	Poe
Campbell (CA)	Hensarling	Rohrabacher
Cannon	Jordan	Royce
Doolittle	King (IA)	Sali
Duncan	Lamborn	Shadegg

NOT VOTING—22

Baldwin	Fortenberry	Sanchez, Loretta
Blackburn	Lantos	Smith (WA)
Blumenauer	Lowe	Tanner
Boucher	Manzullo	Woolsey
Cramer	Marchant	Wynn
Emerson	Porter	Yarmuth
Everett	Pryce (OH)	
Farr	Ruppersberger	

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore (during the vote). Members are advised there are 2 minutes remaining in this vote.

□ 1225

Mr. ROHRABACHER and Mrs. BACHMANN changed their vote from “yea” to “nay.”

So (two-thirds being in the affirmative) the rules were suspended and the bill, as amended, was passed.

The result of the vote was announced as above recorded.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

#### PERSONAL EXPLANATION

Mr. MANZULLO. Madam Speaker, on Wednesday, February 6, 2008, I was unable

to return to Washington in time to vote because of the large snowstorm that hit the Chicago-land area yesterday and delayed my arrival until mid-afternoon today. If I was here, I would have voted “yea” on rollcall No. 29, “yea” on rollcall No. 30, “yea” on rollcall No. 31, “no” on rollcall No. 32, “no” on rollcall No. 33, “yea” on rollcall No. 34, and “yea” on rollcall No. 35.

#### COLLEGE OPPORTUNITY AND AFFORDABILITY ACT OF 2007

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to House Resolution 956 and rule XVIII, the Chair declares the House in the Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union for the consideration of the bill, H.R. 4137.

□ 1225

IN THE COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

Accordingly, the House resolved itself into the Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union for the consideration of the bill (H.R. 4137) to amend and extend the Higher Education Act of 1965, and for other purposes, with Mr. PASTOR in the chair.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The CHAIRMAN. Pursuant to the rule, the bill is considered read the first time.

The gentleman from California (Mr. GEORGE MILLER) and the gentleman from California (Mr. McKEON) each will control 30 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from California (Mr. GEORGE MILLER).

Mr. GEORGE MILLER of California. Mr. Chairman, I yield myself 5 minutes.

Mr. Chairman and Members of the House, I rise in strong support of H.R. 4137, the College Opportunity and Affordability Act, which was reported by the Committee on Education and Labor with unanimous bipartisan support. This legislation strengthens and reauthorizes our Nation's higher education program.

With our recent enactment of the College Cost Reduction and Access Act, this Congress has already taken a historic step by providing the single largest increase in Federal student aid since the GI bill.

But we all know that there's still work to do to ensure that the doors of college are truly open to call qualified students. H.R. 4137 helps us reach this goal.

Today's students and families face a number of challenges on the path to college, from skyrocketing college prices, to needlessly complicated student aid application process, to predatory tactics by student lenders.

The College Opportunity and Affordability Act will address these challenges by reshaping our higher education system so that, once again, it operates in the best interest of students and families.

The bill will create a higher education system that is more affordable and fair and easier to navigate for consumers.

For years, prices have been skyrocketing at colleges and universities around the country, and we can all agree that the increase in college aid was vital. But there's no question we must also begin to address these rising tuition prices.

This legislation would create a new user-friendly Web site for families with helpful information on college pricing and the factors driving tuition increases.

The Web site would also publish lists of the most expensive schools, the least expensive schools, and schools with the largest percentage increase in tuition prices. Colleges with the largest increases in tuition prices would be required to report their reasons for these price hikes and to create a task force to examine how they can work to keep their prices lower.

The bill would also ensure the States would hold up their end of the bargain by providing higher education, by establishing State maintenance-of-effort requirements. We cannot just keep putting in Federal taxpayer dollars at the top and having States take money out of the bottom.

The bill would restore trust and accountability to the student loan program. It would also provide students and families with better protections when it comes to the often murky world of college loans.

The protections for students and parent borrowers in our bill form a bill of rights for college consumers, including fair disclosure loan terms to borrowers of Federal and private loans.

In addition, the bill would simplify the Federal student aid application process and provide families with extra time to plan for their college expenses.

The bill would also:

Make the Pell Grant scholarship available year round for the first time and would increase the authorization for that program;

Strengthen the TRIO and GEAR UP college readiness and support programs that are helping so many students discover that they not only can attend college, they can succeed in college and graduate;

Expand the funding for graduate programs at the Historically Black Colleges and Universities and Hispanic-serving Institutions and minority serving schools;

Increase college aid and support programs for veterans and our men and women in uniform;

To ensure equal opportunities and a fair learning environment for students with disabilities;

And to make our college campuses safer. The bill does all of that, and it's an important change in the higher education responsibilities of the Federal Government and in the support for our higher education institutions and in our partnership with the States.

□ 1230

It has been a long time for this bill to come to the floor. It has been 10 years

since we reauthorized this Act. And in recognizing that long time, I want to certainly point out the contributions made by Congressman BUCK MCKEON, the senior Republican on this committee; RUBÉN HINOJOSA and RIC KELLER of the subcommittee; and the Chairs and ranking members of the Higher Education Committee.

But I just want to say that much of this bill reflects a lot of work that was done by Mr. KELLER, by Mr. MCKEON. Certainly the provisions dealing with college costs reflect an awful lot of work that was done by Mr. MCKEON when he was in the majority on the subcommittee and the full committee by Mr. TIERNEY, on our side of the committee, to bring this to fruition so finally we can start to not only make greater contributions in terms of assistance to families, but also help institutions rein in these costs, discuss these costs with parents and students so that they can make smart choices.

I would also like to thank my committee staff for helping us craft a strong bill, including Denise Forte, Stephanie Moore, Gaby Gomez, Julie Radocchia, Jeff Appel, Sharon Lewis, Julia Martin, and Rachel Racusen.

I would also like to thank the many students across the country whose voices have been so helpful in helping us to understand the changes that needed to be made and also to voice support for this legislation and are a very important part of this process.

I think the entire House can be proud of this legislation, and I think it will help us build a better future for our students and for our economy and for our country, both in terms of our economic security and our national security. And I think it will help fulfill the vision that all American families have for the members of their family to be able to participate in a higher education, to graduate and to pursue their hopes and aspirations, in making full contributions.

With that, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. MCKEON. Mr. Chairman, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Chairman, I rise in support of the College Opportunity and Affordability Act, and I want to begin by thanking Chairman MILLER along with Representatives HINOJOSA and KELLER, the chairman and ranking member of the subcommittee, for their efforts. Representative CASTLE has also been a close partner of mine in an effort to rein in college costs. In fact, it is our effort to address the college cost crisis that is the centerpiece of this legislation.

We know how important higher education is both to individuals and to our Nation. A college degree can be a ticket to the middle class. It helps individuals prepare for good jobs, and it allows them to pursue new skills in the changing economy. Higher education also has important societal benefits. College-educated citizens are healthier, more civically minded, have lower un-

employment rates, and use fewer government benefits. An educated citizenry is also vital to maintaining our competitive edge in a changing world. Because higher education is so important, we made it a priority to ensure all Americans have access to a quality and affordable college education.

In addition to making close to \$100 billion in financial aid available to students, the Federal Government also spends billions each year on aid to institutions: support for college access programs, investments in research and development, and many other avenues that support higher education.

Despite the considerable Federal investment, or perhaps in part because of it, colleges and universities have increased tuition and fees year in and year out. The increases have come in good economic times and in bad with steady enrollments and surging enrollments. It seems the only thing consistent about college costs is that they're going up, and fast.

With this bill, we hope to change that. Our principles for reform are based on the idea that by giving good information to consumers, we can empower them to exert influence on the marketplace. Through the power of sunshine and transparency, we are lifting the veil on college costs and holding institutions of higher learning accountable for their role in the cost equation.

Those principles of sunshine and transparency are hallmarks of this bill and not just in the area of college costs. We are also letting the sunshine in on college operation and quality through enhanced institutional disclosure and a more transparent accreditation process.

There are numerous positive reforms in this bill, too many even for me to name. There are also a number of problems with the bill that I hope we could resolve through the amendment process. Unfortunately, Republicans were blocked from being full participants in this debate.

I urge the majority to work with us as we go to conference to resolve these issues so we can get the strongest possible bill to the President's desk.

I'm particularly concerned that in its zeal to prevent conflicts of interest in student lending, this bill creates a patchwork of new requirements that conflict with existing truth-in-lending rules and disclosures. I'm a firm believer in disclosure, but I also recognize that if we overwhelm borrowers with too much paperwork filled with confusing and conflicting information, we may undermine the consumer protection we are actually trying to achieve.

Right now, we know that many lenders, whether they are banks or State agencies, are providing sound disclosures to borrowers on their student loans. I'm hopeful that as we move into conference we can take that information and use it to develop meaningful

disclosure that will ensure that borrowers receive the same type and quality of information from each lender.

I'm also concerned about the number of new programs created in the bill. Rather than trying to micromanage from Washington, by creating a brand new program for every possible contingency, we should focus on less red tape and greater local flexibility.

Later today, I plan to offer an amendment that moves us in the right direction by identifying duplicate, burdensome, or unnecessary regulations imposed on our higher education system from throughout the Federal Government. This amendment builds on an initiative I began in 2001 in partnership with the late Representative Patsy Mink, known as the Fed Up Project.

Mr. Chairman, there is always room to improve a bill, and the College Opportunity and Affordability Act is no exception. However, on the whole, this bill is an achievement of persistence and commitment. It updates programs to meet the needs of students in the 21st century and to use the power of sunshine and transparency to transform all aspects of our higher education system.

Above all else, this bill offers real solutions to the college cost crisis.

I thank Members on both sides of the aisle for their commitment to this cause.

Mr. Chairman, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. HINOJOSA. Mr. Chairman, as chairman of the Subcommittee on Higher Education, I yield myself as much time as I may consume.

Mr. Chairman, I rise in strong support of H.R. 4137, the College Opportunity and Affordability Act. This legislation will complete our work on the reauthorization of the Higher Education Act and build on the historic investment we made last year in the College Cost Reduction and Access Act.

We opened the 110th Congress taking a fresh look at our higher education laws. Especially, we called for ideas to close the college access and completion gaps for low-income and minority students; to improve the financial aid application and delivery system; to improve preparations so that low-income and first-generation college students are ready to succeed in college academically, financially, and socially; leverage more resource for need-based aid; and yes, to address the escalating cost of a college education.

This bill offers comprehensive, bipartisan solutions to all of these issues. I would like to thank Chairman MILLER and the ranking members of the full committee and the subcommittee, especially to my good friend Congressman MCKEON of California and Congressman KELLER of Florida, for working with us to craft a bill that every Member of this Chamber should be proud to support.

Mr. Chairman, we must be strong and determined to pass H.R. 4137 because we are falling behind in producing col-

lege graduates. During our hearings, we learned that the United States has gone from first to fourth place in the world for college graduates in the workplace. We are only one of two industrialized nations where older workers are more likely to have a college degree than younger workers. This comes at a time when the Bureau of Labor Statistics projects a shortage of 3 million college-educated workers as early as the year 2012.

The gaps in college access and completion is large and growing for low-income and minority students because of the high costs of a college education. According to the Education Trust, since 1994, white students have increased in college completion by 12 percent. African American students have only increased by 5.5 percent, and the Hispanic students only by 3 percent.

Given that over 40 percent of our public school children are racial or ethnic minorities and one in five is Hispanic, it is imperative that we act swiftly and decisively to close the gaps.

Mr. Chairman, this is what the College Opportunity and Affordability Act will do.

H.R. 4137 will close the college access and completion gaps by increasing the authorized Pell Grant maximum to \$9,000 and providing access to Pell Grants and the Academic Competitiveness and SMART Grants year round.

The legislation recognizes the critical role that minority-serving institutions will have to play if we are to produce the college graduates our economy needs to thrive. These institutions represent less than one-third of all of the colleges and universities in our country, but they enroll more than half of all minority students in post-secondary education.

H.R. 4137 authorizes increased investments in building the capacity of these essential institutions and ensures that they are full partners in teacher preparation and our national competitiveness and innovation agenda.

Additionally, H.R. 4137 includes the minority-serving Institution Digital and Wireless Technology Opportunity program, which is a major step forward in ensuring that these colleges and universities can maintain a state-of-the-art educational delivery system.

I am particularly proud of our whole committee's work to strengthen minority access to STEM fields through a youth engagement in STEM partnerships and programs that focus on preparing teachers for these high-need fields.

The College Opportunity and Affordability Act also addresses gaps at the post-baccalaureate level. It has been exactly 10 years since I introduced legislation to create a graduate program for Hispanic-serving institutions, and with the passage of this long awaited legislation, we will be one step closer to enacting this long overdue program.

Additionally, our bill includes the Patsy Mink Fellowship program to provide support for women and minorities

to complete graduate degrees and join the ranks of university faculty where they are severely underrepresented.

H.R. 4137 will improve early college preparation by strengthening programs that are very important to fill the pipeline such as GEAR UP, the TRIO program, the HEP and the CAMP programs and emphasizing financial literacy and early financial aid estimates.

I'm a strong believer of reading and writing literacy, and that's why I am so in favor of programs such as Reading is Fundamental, which is going to help us in graduating more students from high schools.

This bill will leverage resources through great partnerships. One example is the new Grants for Access and Persistence program which will leverage State and private resources to increase student aid so that low-income, first-generation college students are prepared to enroll and succeed in college.

This bill takes real steps to address college costs through public information, accountability, and incentives at the State and institutional levels to keep tuition increases low and college within reach of all students.

□ 1245

H.R. 4137 protects students and families by bringing sunshine and real consumer protection to the student loan programs both at the Federal and the private level.

Finally, the legislation before us today recognizes our collective obligation to the men and women returning from war and seeking to resume their lives. Our Nation owes all our veterans the support to achieve their dreams through a college education after so valiantly serving our country.

H.R. 4137 establishes a new scholarship program for veterans and their families. It ensures fairness for veterans in student aid; it also authorizes Centers of Excellence for veteran student success to provide a one-stop support system on college campuses to help veterans succeed in college and to graduate.

Mr. Chairman, this legislation is ambitious and thorough because that is what these times demand. I encourage all my colleagues in Congress to vote "yes" on H.R. 4137. Let's get this job done.

Mr. Chairman, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. MCKEON. I am happy to yield 3½ minutes at this time to the ranking member on the subcommittee that has the jurisdiction over this higher education bill and commend him for all the work that he has done for college students across the country, the gentleman from Florida (Mr. KELLER).

Mr. KELLER of Florida. I thank the gentleman for yielding.

Mr. Chairman, I rise today in strong support of H.R. 4137, the College Opportunity and Affordability Act, which reauthorizes the Higher Education Act.

I support this legislation because it will expand college access for millions of worthy students primarily by strengthening and reauthorizing the Pell Grant program and Perkins student loan program.

I know that these programs work well because I wouldn't have been able to go to college if it wasn't for Pell Grants and student loans. Also, as the chairman of the Higher Education Subcommittee, and now its ranking member, I know that over 5.5 million students get Pell Grants each year, and over 500,000 of these students also get Perkins student loans, which, together, are the passport out of poverty for so many of these young people.

I'm going to limit my remarks today to the Pell Grant and Perkins loan sections of the bill since they are, in my view, the heart of this legislation.

First, with respect to Pell Grants, Pell Grants are money we give to children from low- and moderate-income families to pay for their college tuition, books, and fees that they never have to repay. This bill strengthens the Pell Grant program by providing year-round Pell Grants to help college students get through college quicker and by increasing the authorization levels.

This legislation also, at my request, has included language which eliminates a wasteful spending loophole that had allowed convicted pedophiles and rapists to get Pell Grants even though Congress passed a law in 1994 making it illegal for prisoners to get Pell Grants. In my home State of Florida, for example, this loophole was exploited by 54 sexual predators who were able to get over \$200,000 in Pell Grants.

By passing this legislation, we will take money out of the hands of convicted predators and put it back into the hands of needy, law-abiding college students where it belongs.

With respect to the Perkins loan program, these are very attractive, low, fixed rate at 5 percent student loans for children of low- and moderate-income families. This legislation will strengthen the Perkins loan program by increasing the loan limits for undergraduate and graduate students and expanding loan forgiveness to now allow firefighters to have their Perkins loan forgiven, as well as nurses, teachers, and police officers.

In closing, I want to thank Chairman MILLER for his hard work, Ranking Member McKEON and Chairman HINOJOSA for working together in a bipartisan spirit. This legislation is good for students; it's also good for our Treasury. The expert studies show that by investing \$16 billion in Pell Grants, it can help yield up to \$85 billion in additional tax revenue because the average college graduate makes 75 percent more than the average high school graduate.

I urge my colleagues to vote "yes" on H.R. 4137. Let us work together in a bipartisan manner to make sure that all children, rich or poor, have the opportunity to get their dream of a college education.

Mr. HINOJOSA. Mr. Chairman, I am pleased to recognize the distinguished gentleman, the majority whip of our caucus, the gentleman from South Carolina (Mr. CLYBURN) for 2 minutes.

Mr. CLYBURN. Thank you for yielding me the time.

Mr. Chairman, I rise today in support of H.R. 4137, the College Opportunity and Affordability Act. Chairman MILLER and his staff are to be commended for putting together a bill that will aid thousands of needy students.

Mr. Chairman, this legislation will ease the financial burdens being placed on working families paying high costs for post-secondary education. Passage of this bill will make post-secondary education more attainable and affordable for all Americans.

H.R. 4137 allows students to receive Pell Grants year-round. This bill also provides incentives to those colleges and universities that work to limit their tuition increases.

As a proud graduate of South Carolina State University, a historically black university in South Carolina, Orangeburg, I am pleased to see that this legislation enhances the HBCU Capital Financing Program's lending and eligibility criteria.

And in light of the hardships suffered by those students who had their schools destroyed by Hurricanes Katrina and Rita, this legislation establishes a program to help schools rebuild in the event of a natural disaster. This education package also helps colleges implement enhanced campus safety and disaster readiness plans.

Our Nation's continued prosperity is dependent upon the investment that we make in securing the futures of our children and grandchildren. This legislation will help to maintain America's strong global standing by providing our students the tools and resources they need to be competitive in a transnational economy.

I encourage my colleagues to support this bill.

Mr. KELLER of Florida. Mr. Chairman, at this time I yield 4 minutes to the gentleman from Indiana (Mr. SOUDER).

Mr. SOUDER. I thank the gentleman from Florida.

Often our differences in this body can be fairly sharp and our disagreements can be fairly significant over which direction our country should actually head, and such debate is very healthy in a democracy and vital to getting good policy. But there are other times when, in fact, we can work together, and this bill is an example where we can work together.

There are multiple examples in this bill where we fundamentally agreed, and there were other things we worked through in the amendment process. One important component of this originally CHAKA FATTAH and I sponsored; it was originally called High Hopes. President Clinton adopted that as GEAR UP as one of his major programs. Obviously, this is a little dif-

ficult on the Republican side, but we managed to pass it through in a Republican Congress with a Democrat President. We held it as a Republican Congress with a Republican President. And now with a Democrat Congress and Republican President, GEAR UP continues to expand and be a very effective way for low-income students to have the hope, if they keep good grades and stay out of trouble, to be assured that they can be eligible for student loans, Pell Grants, and other things to provide a promise of a future education.

We also worked as we tried to tackle things like long-distance learning and online learning, which is a growth category. I appreciate the majority's willingness to work on how colleges and these new experimental universities can work towards distance learning and expanding without having the heavy hand of government make determinations of when they can and when they can't. There have to be substantive objections, not arbitrary guidelines. And they worked on the language to make sure that was the case.

We had another technical issue on cohort measurements on student loans that some private universities, particularly those that are more trade-oriented, as well as minority-based organizations in the original draft of this bill, could have seen them go into default. And many low-income, minority, and trade colleges and so on would have been in deep trouble. But the majority took an adjustment in that cohort. Yes, if a college is underperforming and not providing education that is so necessary to students, it should be disqualified from the student loan program; but we have to make sure that colleges, and trade areas in particular, don't get arbitrarily knocked out because often they're reaching the very people we're trying to attract into higher education. I appreciate the majority.

There has also been a provision that I had in the higher ed bill years ago that caused some consternation. I want to make sure that the record shows that we were able to work on the student loan provision that says if you get convicted of a drug crime, you are suspended from your student loan; that we have provisions in this bill, working with the majority, to make sure how the drug tests are done so that if you test clean twice, you can get your loan back. We have provisions here that make it clear that each institution of higher education shall provide each student, upon enrollment, a separate, clear, conspicuous written notice that addresses this question.

This was very important because this provision was meant as a deterrence, not as a punishment. If a student is at a party and somebody says, hey, do you want to try this, you ought to try this pot. This will work really well; this will get you high. This meth may keep you so you can stay awake to study, you can say, look, I could lose my loan

here and lose everything I have. It's one more arsenal in your ability to fight illegal narcotics and stay in school. Furthermore, if you're on narcotics, your performance inevitably will drop over time.

This provision has received bipartisan support. We have continued to clarify it. And I want to make sure that, unlike previous times when this was interpreted to apply to everybody, or if you had committed a crime before, you could lose your loan, a student is a student is a student. It says, if you have your loan, you can lose your loan. It has nothing to do with people who rehab; it has nothing to do with people who maybe were in college for 2 years, went out, had problems, and then come back. We want those people in school. And I hope the administration this time will interpret this, regardless of which party it is, correctly. And I want to make sure that the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD shows what the intent of Congress was.

Mr. HINOJOSA. Mr. Chairman, I am pleased to recognize the gentleman from Illinois, the Democratic Caucus Chair, Congressman RAHM EMANUEL, for 2½ minutes.

Mr. EMANUEL. Mr. Chairman, the FAFSA form that students and their parents have to fill out every year for student aid is over 100 questions, over eight pages long. If a company is applying for an export/import loan from the government, it's 13 questions, one page long. But a kid is going to college and his parents have to fill out over 100 questions.

Let me read you some of the questions. Go to page 8 and complete the columns on the left of worksheets A, B and C. Enter the student totals in questions 44, 45 and 46, respectively. Worksheet B, first of 12 items; payments to tax deferred pension and savings paid directly or withheld from earnings, included, but not limited to, amounts reported on the W-2 form in boxes 12-A through 2D, codes, D, E, F, G, H and S. If you can fill that out, skip college, go to graduate school.

Now, thankfully for the chairman, we have now put in here to streamline this and create an easy form so this is not one of the leading causes of divorce in America, the College Aid Plan. And if a company can get lawyers and accountants to fill out a one-page form and get a big loan for \$200 million from the government, taxpayer subsidies, kids trying to go to college and achieve the American Dream should have something as easy as a big company has. And, thankfully, this legislation would accomplish that.

When I ran for office, I used to, and I still do, visit fire stations. And Pat Kehoe, who is a captain in the Chicago Fire Department, was the one that turned me on to the notion of what he and his wife have to do every year to try to get student aid so their kid can go to the University of Illinois. And every year they have to fill out a form like this.

The goal here is for government to finally catch up and get to where the private sector has been, which is creating easy forms, things that they can do online and get rid of all the bureaucracy and all the paperwork.

Earlier this year, we passed the largest increase in college aid since the GI Bill. This legislation will build on that reform so we finally make sure that college aid, in the period and the era of where you earn where you learn, is accessible to middle-class families and their dreams that they have for their children.

Mr. KELLER of Florida. Mr. Chairman, I note that Mr. EMANUEL's extension was shorter than even his form that he's seeking here, but we're in broad bipartisan support of that simplified process. It was a wonderful idea, and I'm glad we could work with him.

At this time, I yield 1 minute to the gentleman from Nebraska.

□ 1300

Mr. SMITH of Nebraska. Mr. Chairman, since being elected to Congress, I have had the opportunity to speak with young students throughout the Third District of Nebraska. They are smart and sharp, and we need to do everything we can to encourage them. Unfortunately, however, many rural States have seen what we call "brain drain" in recent years. As the depletion occurs, we lose our most vital economic asset to more populated areas. Responsible policy is needed to retain and grow our workforce to make our rural communities more competitive in this modern economy.

The College Opportunity and Affordability Act seeks to address this by encouraging economic development partnerships. These partnerships would be formed between rural colleges and universities and rural employers. This would provide additional career training to students attending rural schools in fields significant to the local economy. It also would encourage rural businesses to employ students once they graduate.

I thank the chairman and ranking member for working with me to target these partnerships to the areas in the most need.

Mr. HINOJOSA. Mr. Chairman, I am pleased to recognize the gentleman from New Jersey, a distinguished member of our Higher Education Subcommittee (Mr. HOLT), for 2 minutes.

Mr. HOLT. Mr. Chairman, I would like to commend Chairman MILLER and Mr. McKEON for producing a strong piece of legislation. The College Opportunity and Affordability Act does what the name suggests. It expands affordability and access to college education for the broadest range of Americans. It expands Pell Grants, the basis of financial aid, and I'm pleased to say it allows Pell Grants to be used year round and for certificate programs and part-time students, something I have been working on for a long time.

The bill does many other things, including some initiatives that I have

been working on. It empowers small and community colleges to provide child care programs so that working mothers can attend school. It includes grants and loan forgiveness for math and science students who pledge to conduct service in math and science fields after graduation. It includes grants for foreign language partnerships between local schools and language departments at institutions of higher learning and grants to institutions that will combine science with foreign languages.

I am pleased that in the Education and Labor Committee we were able to pass an amendment so that this bill would create an Assistant Secretary for International and Foreign Language Education.

I am pleased to note further that the bill will direct the Institute of Medicine to study how to deal with the shortage of nurses that's created by the shortage of nursing faculty.

These initiatives are part of a large effort to make it easier for students to finance their education and an effort to strengthen the quality of education that they receive. This is a good bill. I look forward to working with Members of both parties to see it become law.

Mr. HINOJOSA. Mr. Chairman, I move that the Committee do now rise.

The motion was agreed to.

Accordingly, the Committee rose; and the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. WALZ of Minnesota) having assumed the chair, Mr. PASTOR, Chairman of the Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union, reported that that Committee, having had under consideration the bill (H.R. 4137) to amend and extend the Higher Education Act of 1965, and for other purposes, had come to no resolution thereon.

#### PERMISSION TO REDUCE TIME FOR ELECTRONIC VOTING DURING FURTHER CONSIDERATION OF H.R. 4137

Mr. HINOJOSA. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that, during further consideration of H.R. 4137 pursuant to House Resolution 956, the Chair may reduce to 2 minutes the minimum time for electronic voting under clause 6 of rule XVIII and clauses 8 and 9 of rule XX.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Texas?

There was no objection.

#### COLLEGE OPPORTUNITY AND AFFORDABILITY ACT OF 2007

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to House Resolution 956 and rule XVIII, the Chair declares the House in the Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union for the further consideration of the bill, H.R. 4137.

□ 1305

IN THE COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

Accordingly, the House resolved itself into the Committee of the Whole